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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Related Application

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/125013, filed March 18, 1999, which is incorporated herein by reference.

2. The Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to broadcast data. More specifically, the present invention relates to retrieving broadcast data from one or more broadcast data sources and delivering the broadcast data to an application through a common interface.

3. The Prior State of the Art

A television broadcast contains more than video and audio data, it also contains broadcast data. While the primary function of a television broadcast is to transmit video and audio data, additional information may be forwarded to a user, which may or may not be related to the video and audio data, in the form of broadcast data. Typically, broadcast data is embedded or inserted in the television broadcast and is used to convey a wide variety of information including closed captioning data, program guide data, event ratings, crossover Uniform Resource Locators, and more.

Two types of television broadcasts which are used to transmit and carry broadcast data are analog television broadcasts and digital television broadcasts. Because the broadcast data is embedded or added to the television broadcast, the broadcast data does not replace the video and audio data. Unfortunately, the evolution of broadcast data has not been uniform and as a result, broadcast data is typically hard to locate, hard to read, and frequently contains duplicate values. These difficulties in combination with the fact that